SAN JOSE HISTORICAL MUSEUM
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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INTERVIEWEE: Helen Ruff Crawford

SUBJECT: Family background, ranch life, growing up in San Jose, life in the thirties

INTERVIEWER: Jacqueline Lohr, SJHM Volunteer

TRANSCRIBER: Evelyn K. Cannon, SJHM Volunteer

Introduction by Jacqueline Lohr: This is an interview with Mrs. Helen Ruff Crawford. The interview is taking place on March 1, 1995 at her home in the Rosegarden area of San Jose. My name is Jacqueline Lohr. I'm a volunteer in the Oral History Program of the San Jose Historical Museum and will be interviewing Helen today. She is going to relate some of her experiences in growing up and living in San Jose.

HRC = Helen Ruff Crawford

JL = Jacqueline Lohr

JL Helen, I thought we could start with your talking about your family background, things like when and where you were born, etc.

HRC Well, I'm Helen Ruff Crawford and I was born in San Jose July 30, 1911. I was born in the home that my father built for us and my parents were George and Marie Ruff (Roof). That's how it was pronounced because it was a German name. My father was George Ruff and he was born

in Germany in a little town called Brachstadt and his parents also, the grandparents, were also born there in the town of Brachstadt in the Bavarian country of Germany. Well, his mother and father were married in the same little town and the father had been in the Prussian Army so when he returned he married his high school sweetheart and they had five children. After they had these children they moved to a wonderful farm called Bauenhausenschweige in another village on the Danube River. They must have been there about 10 or 12 years when the Danube River would overflow and the crops would be ruined so they ultimately gave up and moved to Hausern. They were there for about a year, it wasn't very pleasant, so he wrote to his brother, who was living in America in San Jose, and said, "Well how could we make it in America?" So Uncle Lou wrote back and said, "If all the children work you can make it." So they decided to come. My grandmother packed her mother's _____ dishes and her silver and I guess they got a ship at Antwerp, Belgium and the trip ended up at New York at Ellis Island. They never talked about the trip across the country by train but they arrived in San Jose and Uncle Lou was living here with his wife, a wonderful Irish lady who had been born in the Gold Country at a homestead _____, so they lived with her and they all praised Aunt Mary because she was wonderful.

She not only taught my father the English language, she made dresses for the little girls, my Aunt Kate, my Aunt Barbara, my Aunt Marian, so they had a deep love for her always.

(Long pause on tape.)

HRC Uncle Louie and his wife decided to leave San Jose and went back to Marysville where her parents had homesteaded land. In fact, the homestead is still in their family's descendants' name. Well my grandfather and his family stayed in San Jose and he first had a home on Howard Street and I imagine he probably worked at the Fredricksburg Brewery, which is off The Alameda, and many of the German people did work there. After he worked there for a while he saw an ad in the paper about this Randall home that was for sale, it was on Spring Street, so my grandfather bought it. The paper said it cost $30,000 to build so that was quite a lot in those days.

JL Yes, it was an awful lot.

HRC And he started a dairy there called The Golden State Dairy. And the home was very very elegant, the tall ceilings and I would say the marble washbasins and wonderfully furnished with Victorian antiques and

Chickering piano at the end and I remember the elegantly flocked paper that was there. And the Guadalupe Creek was at the end of the farm. So anyway there was fishing and boating on what we called Guadalupe Creek. I understand that maybe many years later they rechanneled the creek so that it flowed further east from where it is now.

JL Do you mean that at that time it was further west and then they moved it?

HRC Yes.

JL It was almost on your property at that time?

HRC Oh it was, right on the end of our property.

JL Now Spring Street is that just almost where what? the Arena? Behind it?

HRC No, Spring Street is, I would say, right near Guadalupe Park now, it's Spring and Hedding.

JL So that's where your house was at that time?

HRC That's where my grandparents were, they were at 1000

Spring Street. This is near the airport. So anyway, they had the dairy and my father, I have pictures of him with the wagon in which they delivered the milk, so all the children worked so they were able to make it.

JL So he had the dairy and the family worked it. Did he have other employees or....?

HRC That I do not remember. But this house is described in Jack London's "Call of the Wild." He tells that the dog Buck was stolen from this residence and so it describes the place as beautiful Terrytop(?) with lovely bars. And it's very interesting to read "Call of the Wild" and know that that describes it right at the beginning of the book.

JL Now you're saying that it describes your grandparents' home?

HRC Yes, it describes the old house and the farm and describes how wonderfully Buck was treated and then he was stolen away and mistreated as you know.

JL Makes you want to read the book again.

HRC Well, my grandparents entertained a great deal, they

would have family parties and Christmas time we would all go over there and they'd have a Christmas tree with all these little candles, no electricity, and we all looked forward to the Christmas at the big old house. And they would entertain a family from Pinole, one of my father's brothers had this huge store at Pinole. It was the only store, they had the bus because they had to have the newspaper stands, telephones were there and I remember the cousins plugging in the things to make the telephones connect. So it was very much _____ because he had a wonderful store with lots of candy and ice cream so we could help ourselves to all these wonders.

JL Excuse me, Helen, but you said something about Jack London described your grandparents' home. Is that because he visited there?

HRC Yes yes, the Mercury News had said that he would often get off at the College Park Station and walk to the grandparents' home and would stay there. Very often he would come down and I guess that is thought why he used that as the place for his story "Call of the Wild." I imagine he visited my aunts and uncles and in fact my Aunt Kate married August Beuger, who was a very good friend to Jack London, and often they were the Socialists

at the time and they would talk or preach as _____ _____.

(Pause on the tape.)

HRC (Rustling papers) The front part of the estate faced Spring Street. Your _____ headed on Spring Street and the property north was Hamlin Street. The south side, where Hedding Street is now -- by the way, my father donated half of that land from Spring Street to where the Guadalupe Creek is, donated it, and my Uncle August Beuger who married my Aunt Kate was horrified that he would give it (chuckling) all to the City of San Jose. But he was a very generous man.

JL And that's where they had Hedding go through towards The Alameda then, by donating it they were able to go through.

HRC Yes, before that there was no bridge there. It stopped, Hedding Street stopped at Spring Street. So he had foresight to donate that so they would open it up, made the property more valuable. (Rustling papers) As I said, I remember the house very well because I would go over there each day from my own little home that my father had built and have lunch with my grandmother,

every day I'd go back and forth.

JL Now where was your house?

HRC Father built a house about a half a block away and so that's where we lived.

JL So you lived in the same area as the huge house of your grandparents?

HRC Yes. Each day I would go and have an afternoon nap with her in this elegant old living room or go upstairs and she would tell stories like the elf and the shoemaker and similar old stories. And my favorite cousin would come down from San Francisco on the train, he'd be about five years old then, get off the train and walk over to the residence and he would stay there and he and I would play together. The older brothers had their thing and he and I were the younger ones so we just _____. I also remember the redwood sturdy bannister going up the stairs and my grandparents would let us slide down there. They never said no you can't slide down that elegant bannister. My grandparents started it there, I think I told you, the Golden Gate Dairy and in 1899 my Aunt Barbara married Robert McManigal, the man who worked in the Southern Pacific Railroad. They moved to San

Francisco because his headquarters were at the Southern Pacific Railway. In 1900 my Aunt Kate married August Beuger; they lived in Cupertino first but then later on they moved to Mount Pleasant where they have a school named after him now, The August Beuger School. In 1906 the earthquake came and my father moved to San Francisco to help with the reconstruction. While there he'd go across the Bay to visit my Aunt Kate's family and he met my mother who had just come from Germany. Her name was Mary Kaiser and she'd left her home Heusern _____ ---------- in the Black Forest to visit her uncle, Edward Kuchler, and she was employed as the governess of the Howard family in Oakland (sound of turning pages). These people had three boys, one of them was named Bruce and he loved her very dearly. But after much courting my father talked her into getting married and they moved down to San Jose and my father had built this house where they moved to and when my mother entered she said, "Where's the hall?" There wasn't any entrance hall. So she was very interested in home furnishings and making the little cottage look nice. Roses were in style so she had rose carpets with roses on it and I remember the living room, she had the green with the roses and then she had pictures with roses on it and her _____ was Wallace rose and her linens would have roses on them. She thought everything would be rosy (chuckle). So

anyway, my father built this bungalow on ten acres at Spring Street and the property stopped at the Guadalupe Creek.

JL Now this was next to your grandparents' property or part of it?

HRC Yes, it was about, I would say, a half a block away probably built on part of my grandparents' property. They were married in the big house though.

JL Oh they were married in the house, at the house.

HRC Yes they were, at my grandparents' home and my mother had two bridesmaids, my sister-in-law Marian Wagner, and Mable Kreech, who later married a Vincent Brewer. And those were her two attendants and I don't know who my father's attendants were but the reception was there at the lovely home. Well I guess about a year later, on June 2, 1908, the first child was born. His name was Jonas and when he was five years old he was bilingual and he entered the first grade at College Park School and not only that, he was lefthanded and they made him write righthanded so he had a disadvantage of very young, bilingual and he was lefthanded, very much lefthanded, it was very difficult for him to write righthanded.

JL It's strange you say bilingual because there was a handicap but I know as a former language teacher that was....

HRC They said he had a handicap as bilingual.

JL Well of course that today is a great advantage (laughter) so things have changed.

HRC Well he did not achieve very well and so my father put up with that for I think maybe four years and then after that he decided to send him to a city school because that was College Park School, it was county.

JL Oh I see.

HRC And since then College Park has been torn down.

JL Do you know which school was that, Hester?

HRC No we went to Jefferson.

JL Jefferson.

HRC On December 4, 1910 the second child was born. He was blonde, green-eyed and very athletic, very popular. It

was our first heartbreak that he died at the age of 14. They said it was pneumonia. He had his tonsils removed in the doctor's office and then was brought home in the little foreign car and he never recovered, died of pneumonia. My brother and I were at Jefferson School at the time and we were having lunch and I remember the principal coming out and saying, "You have to go home because your brother's sick", so when we got home my father met us at the back door and said, "All his troubles are over", that was the way he told us. So anyway, that was very sad for us because my two brothers were very good friends, they never fought. I don't think my parents would allow them to bicker and fight as they do now. On July 30, 1911 I was born and the early days were spent with complete freedom following my two brothers all over College Park District or walking over to my grandparents' home or resting in her huge living room or going upstairs with her when she told us these wonderful old stories. Every Christmas until I was around 10 years old all the aunts and uncles would gather and celebrate Christmas at the grandparents' home. I remember during World War I, I was worried that my father would be drafted but he wasn't 'cause he had two children. Instead we all went out to Mount Pleasant to help my Uncle August on his ranch. After the war my dad bought a dairy (sound of turning pages) and they

traveled back to their home in College Park.

(End of Tape 1, Side 1.)

(Beginning of Tape 1, Side 2.)

(Transcriber's note: There is a long pause at the beginning of Side 2.)

HRC Well after the war, 1918 I guess it was, they had made money at the fruit and so my father came back and bought a dairy and they named it the College Park Dairy. And I remember they all worked hard to establish it and were very proud of the quality of the milk and they had lots of customers. And I remember they named all of the cows, Louise, Rose and all cute names and one time they went to buy this very fancy bull. I remember them going in their little foreign car over to I think it was by Visalia. They bought this very fine bull, I still remember the name, Toyon King Valdesso, and I have this plaque to prove it, this beautiful animal. So anyway, life was hard on the farm for them, they all worked, my brothers worked and helped and I did nothing. All I did was roam like Topsey, I just grew up.

JL So girls weren't expected to work or you were just

spoiled?

HRC I guess I was spoiled and I just would go to Grandmother's house or walk all over the neighborhood and no girls in the neighborhood.

JL You were a lot younger, weren't you?

HRC Yes, not that much younger, I should have helped.

JL There were no girls so you got to go to Grandma's.

HRC I remember going to the Fosgate Ranch which was owned by Spreckels, it was the end of Spring Street, it was grain fields _____ _____ and in there they had planted sweetpeas and it was beautiful so we'd go over there in the tall grain and then pick all these wonderful sweetpeas. Another thing I remember was one night a colt was born and it was for my brothers, this lovely little colt born in the middle of the night. But the sad thing was, I forgot how it died but it just lived about a year. And then my father did all these things to make his son interested in cattle ranching. And I remember my father homesteading his property back of Mount Hamilton, it was 160 acres and the deed was signed by _____, I think it was about 1914. So they went up there to

prove -- they called it prove -- on it, prove on the ranch, and my brother was up there but he never was interested in that type of cowboy life.

JL Now this was the oldest son?

HRC This is the oldest son.

JL The other one had died.

HRC He had died earlier._____ _____. He might have had a heart murmer, something like that, we don't know. In those days they didn't know much about medicine. So let's see, when we got back from Mount Pleasant work during the war, my father decided he didn't want us to go to College Park School anymore because my brother wasn't getting a very good education. In fact, the teacher that he had called my father a "Hun." (Laughter)

JL And that surely was right after the war.

HRC Right after the war he called him a Hun. So he just decided to send us to a city school at Jefferson School and he bought us three new bicycles, the boys' was green, mine was red, and off we went. I guess it must have been

a mile and a half from our home and the other school was a block away. But he was never sorry that he sent us there. Jefferson School was really a very beautiful school, built around a courtyard and all the classes were around this lawn and I remember each day we all would read and somebody would play a triangle for us to march into the room and we would all stand around the court and pledge allegiance to the flag and the principal would state the announcements for the day and then we'd all go back into our classrooms. And there were absolutely no discipline problems for the teachers.

JL So you attended Jefferson. Did you ever go to College Park from there?

HRC I just went to College Park for about the first two years.

JL Now, do you think there was a big difference between the county school and the city school?

HRC Yes I think so because at the county school they only had the two teachers and the one teacher was very very poor. In fact, my poor brother spent most of his time in the cooker and if you don't know what a cooker was....

JL Oh I don't know.

HRC It was underneath the teacher's desk and this poor little thing had to spend his time underneath her desk.

JL For punishment you mean?

HRC For punishment (laughter).

JL Goodness!

HRC So anyway, he got to Jefferson School and had a wonderful teacher, Mrs. Apple, I remember her name. She was a mother too, she had a son and she was very wonderful so it was a big big move. And I went to third grade and I also had a wonderful teacher, her name was Marian Werner. She had graduated from Stanford and was the most caring wonderful teacher.

JL I'm amazed that you remember all these names.

HRC Why I even remember who my second brother got. He had, I think, a Miss Marjorie Gray, marvelous teacher, so we were all very happy. And when my brother Georgie died, he had a Miss Marjorie Rigdar who was fantastic. She not only had a wonderful program for geography, history and

_____, she was so good at art and so interested in art about which they didn't do very much in those days. Jefferson School was across from the Vendome Hotel, it was the finest hotel in the town of course and it was patterned after the Santa Maria Inn in Santa Maria and it was, I guess, more than a block around and they had a swimming pool and tennis court and of course the Jefferson School children could go over there to swim. All of us learned to swim there.

JL Now did you go as a class?

HRC No we just had the freedom to go over there. And I remember Wilbur Cox was in my brother's class and he became quite a champion in tennis because he used those grounds all the time. My brother Jonas's best friend was Billy Green, he later worked for PG&E, and his younger brother Gordon was an outstanding student, he went to San Jose High and graduated and went to Stanford, graduated from Stanford and then on his first job with the San Francisco Bees he got appendicitis and he died. Just a wonderful boy after all that education, it was so sad. Well when I was in the third grade I met my first girlfriend because everybody in my neighborhood were boys, that was Bernice Zetterquist. I don't know if you've heard of the Zetterquist family.

JL The name sounds familiar to me.

HRC They had many children, the father worked for the railroad and Herman Zetterquist was very prominent in San Jose. He was in charge of the Richard Chase Cannery over here and _____.

JL That used to be on Stockton Avenue, didn't it?

HRC Yes. Well, besides going to Jefferson School we were enrolled in St. Edward's Hall, which was a Catholic School where the St. Elizabeth's Day Home nuns came to teach the catechism. We'd have a little Christmas play at times.

JL This would be after school hours?

HRC Yes, right after school hours. And they prepared you for First Communion and for Confirmation which took place at St. Joseph's Church then, now it's the Cathedral, but that's where I had my First Communion and my brothers did and our Confirmation. About 1923 my grandfather passed away and so after that they rented the old house and it was pretty sad, you know, the renters didn't take care of it. In fact, many antique dealers would steal the marble basins out of the wall and they started robbing the

furniture which was taken by different tenants that were _____ from the old house. About the only thing I've got from it is some of the old silver, I'll show it to you. So after my grandfather died the house really went downhill and I think about 1915 some hippies rented it and it was burned to the ground.

JL Well by that time were there other homes around or the land was developed? Where the house was that burned in the '60's it must have been. It was out by the airport, you said.

HRC Yes. It had been rented by many Japanese families. They were pretty good tenants.

JL Was there a lot of property around that was part of the house that was there or was it still kind of isolated? Or was it?

HRC It was and when the Japanese were there they always had crops, strawberries and raspberries, and after the house burned they still rented the land and had crops, celery, strawberries....

JL Now this was before you get to the airport?

HRC Yes.

JL It was south of the airport so north of Hedding.

HRC I remember my father being very pleased that the airport was coming because my brother was very interested in aviation and my father saw the first plane come in to be

_____

_____ (voice inaudible). (Sound of turning pages.) Oh, I forgot to tell you that my father loved the Mount Hamilton Range and he decided to homestead property back there so in the Isabel Valley he took up 160 acres and built a cabin there and I guess they had a wonderful well. And I guess after it was all proved up President Taft gave him a certificate showing that he had now that 160 acres. So my mother and her little family went up there, I guess for six months, lived there and I remember going up with them, I forgot how we got there, but it was a long windy road but when we got there we had to pack the provisions up over the hill to the property which was a little wooden cabin. And when I entered I said, "I want to go home because this is a muddy house", because it was boards, it didn't have wallpaper (laughter) so my father gave me a spanking so I learned not to say unkind things (laughter). He'd worked hard to build that cabin.

JL So you and your mother and your brother and your father lived up there for six months.

HRC Yes and my father would go back and forth.

JL Now you did this, what is it?

HRC That was all before World War I.

JL Uh huh and that was done to lay claim to the property?

HRC Yes. I remember there was an Indian that lived next door on the Morrell Ranch and he would bring us biscuits that he had made and this was the Indian and they called him Rock Adams. I remember him and it was a big event for him to come over to visit us. And then we had friends who worked at Mount Hamilton, he was _____, named Lipson Weibel and he and his family would come to visit. He had two daughters and his wife and they would come to visit, that would be 12 miles from Mount Hamilton. Other visitors would be, oh I can't remember any other visitors because it was really hard to get there.

JL Hard to get up there, yeah. So when you came back you went back to the house on Spring Street.

HRC Yes and then of course my father had some property then and since then he bought more acreage. He ended up with over a thousand acres back there that he bought, he knew it so well because he loved deer hunting and going up there.

JL So with the original 126 acres that he homesteaded he enlarged it.

HRC Yes he had to find more.

JL Uh huh, he enlarged it to a thousand acres.

HRC He even had his Uncle Carlo take up 150 acres and had another friend take up 150. All of this was to _____ _____ so that he was able to have cattle up there and even after he sold the dairy he had his cattle. In World War II he had this interest in cattle up there.

JL You mentioned that your older brother was interested in....

HRC Flying.

JL Flying so what happened?

HRC Yeah, he graduated from Tech High School as a machinist, very interested in machinery. My mother begged him to go to Santa Clara University but he wanted to go do his aviation thing and so he paid for his own instructions and he worked for Jackson's Automotive Service, he was really very skilled at _____. So every spare money would go into his plane, he bought a Curtis Robert with Bud Craton and Dick Cosgrave and Bud was telling me just today when he came over that my brother flew his Robert underneath the Golden Gate Bridge when it was first built. That was exciting and that was about the time of the World's Fair at Treasure Island that my brother had his plane.

JL And only 35 in '39 about then?

HRC Yes so we always would go up there several times _____ _____. I had already _____ by then. Well I'll tell you about that later.

JL How about high school? Did you go to a....?

HRC Well, after I graduated from grammar school I remember we had a real tiny class and they voted me president of the class. But I thought this boy from New Jersey should be, he was an Italian boy who had had so much math and really

loved it, I wanted him to be president. But Miss Ellen O'Rourke was our teacher, she said _____ _____ so he didn't get the job, I got it (laughter) So after I graduated from Jefferson School I was supposed to go to Woodrow Wilson Junior High but my friend Audrey Donyonovich took me under her wing after my brother had died, she was very much in love with him. So anyway, she decided she wanted me to go to Roosevelt because she _____ there so the principal of Roosevelt lived across the street from her, Jessie Pool, so she knew _____ me to Roosevelt.

JL Again out of your way.

HRC Yeah, way out of my way. So I would take the streetcar and my home was very far from the Alameda, I had to walk to the Alameda, _____, take it all the way out to -- what is it, 26th Street? gosh -- we had a lot of fun on the streetcar coming back and forth.

JL Then after junior high you went to San Jose High?

HRC Yes. I went only at Roosevelt for one year because it was the first year the school was built and so the first few months we had to meet at Hawthorne School and then after a while we got the school.

JL Now this would have been when? In the 20's?

HRC Probably about 1925 and I wanted to show you the picture of the whole class at Roosevelt Junior High with scads of kids from Nageli Park, The Alameda and all that.

JL How many would you say there were here? There must be over a hundred.

HRC Oh yeah. There's a picture of the school.

JL Now was this just seventh and eighth grades?

HRC At that time it was just eighth and ninth _____ _____ years in high school, just three. I was the first class that went in for only three years and I always felt badly about that. But some of the students at Roosevelt were Brooky Hart, he was in my class.

JL Now Brook Hart was the Hart boy who was kidnapped and killed?

HRC Yes.

JL And the _____ were Haynes and _____.

HRC And his cousin was Billie Morra(?) and Billie was also in that class and Clara Thieboldt(?), just mobs of very very reknowned San Jose people. I have this picture, I should give it to the Museum.

JL Well probably, yes.

HRC I'll ask. You asked about the shopping.

JL Oh yeah.

HRC Well my mother made me a shopaholic because her big thing every week was for her to go downtown Saturdays and to....
(Statement ended in mid-sentence.)

(End of Tape 1, Side 2.)

(Beginning of Tape 2, Side 1.)

JL (Statement inaudible.)

HRC Well, I'm really talking about the shopping and the San Jose downtown was a wonderful little town in those days, maybe about 20,000, 15, and we had the stores called Prussia's, Blum's, Appleton's, Hale's, Hart's and

wonderful stores in between. So every Saturday that would be our outing to go downtown and you'd meet so many people you knew, they'd all be shopping on a Saturday, quite a recreation. The neighbors that we had were the Sweigers, they moved there about the year that my brother died, in 1923 they moved so we did a lot of entertaining back and forth with them; their names were Lloyd and Creo Sweiger. They had two children, one was Marvin, the other was Debbie, and then the grandmother lived with them, her name was Emaline Morrison and the grandfather was Mr. Morrison we always called him. So we learned a lot about cooking from them and their nice dinner parties. Other friends that we entertained were the Weibels from Mount Hamilton. He was the machinist at the Lick Observatory. We would have Thanksgiving or Christmas with them or they'd have us. And another type of recreation was going to San Francisco. We would go by the train and Cousin Jimmy would take me to Golden Gate Park and Aunt Marian would take me to the lovely hotels and also we would go to the beach or Fleischacker Zoo and to the Fleischacker Plunge as they called it, that was a swimming pool. Other types of recreation would be barbecues and mostly parties that we would have with our friends. After I graduated from the eighth grade I went to Roosevelt Junior High, I think I told you all about that already. (Sound of turning page) It was a strange

year because the school was very new and we were kind of glad to get out of that and really getting to high school so I enrolled in the academic course and I always wanted to be a teacher ever since I was six years old. Let's see, some of the fun things we did while in high school. I would double date with my cousin George Foggert and his friend Charlie Bankle but of course my friend Audrey would always be the other person. Audrey always had wonderful _____ parties at her home. Some of the people she would invite would be Lou Scales, who later taught at Stanford, and Paul Martin, who became a prominent doctor in San Jose, Bob Gilmore, Paul Rossi and Evelyn Raymond, who later married Mr. Driscoll, he had the strawberries. My brother went to Tech High, which I told you, and he worked at Jackson's Automotive Service and of course his interest was really aviation and flying. He was into gliding also and he built a glider and the friends that he went with were Jim Empe, Lee Favizzo, Earl and Cooley Bradford, George Wagner. And they would build their own glider and even the Chronicle would write up articles about their gliders on the beaches, I guess, at San Francisco. In 1935 my brother flew his plane to South America _____ Billie and her husband, his wife went with him, the _____ went to South America and they were held up in the Panama Canal Zone. This was in 1935, because of the war effort they were afraid to let

them go on to South America. I guess they thought they were spies. And he stayed in Panama quite a while, because he was a machinist he easily found jobs. He worked in an instrument shop but he still had his plane and always his spare time was in flying. But he would visit San Jose once a year and my mother and I went down to visit him in 1936, we went down on a ship called the Virginia and we went down and had this wonderful cruise down the Pacific.

JL This was all before you were married of course.

HRC Yes, uh huh, in 1936.

JL Well how did you meet Herb?

HRC Oh I met him about 1931 when I was still in college.

JL And you still hadn't married in 1936.

HRC No, depression time (laughter), no one got married. Well anyway, I met Herb at Harbin Hot Springs, that was a resort in Lake County and I had gone up with my college sorority sisters to wait on tables, wait on _____, my mother was very much against it. I think it's the only time I disobeyed my mother, she didn't want me to go

but I went. So we were up there and the first night this orchestra came in and started to participate in playing for the dance and Herb was in the orchestra, he was a saxophonist and it was really a very wonderful jazz band. The leader of the orchestra became very famous, his name was Gilbar Evans and he was a marvelous musician. But anyway, that's how I met Herb and the waitresses would say, "I'll take out the drummer and I'll take this one", they were all taken and only Herb was left. So anyway....

JL (Laughter) Weren't you lucky!

HRC Yeah, it worked out all right. We were the only ones that ever got married in all of them (laughter). Where were we?

JL Well, you met Herb and then where were you married? When and where were you married?

HRC Well, first I had to decorate this house, that way ____ _____. So then my first job was in _____ which is between Tehachapi and Bakersfield. My brother flew me down in his Curtis Lowry to get an interview and at Delano a tire flew off the plane so we had to stop there. So my cousin in

Bakersfield came out in their car to pick me up and I got the interview and I got the job. So it was $1500 a year, that was it. I had the highest salary of everybody in the whole town. Well I had to live in Tehachapi with the principal of the little school and every day we'd go 12 miles down the hill to _____ and later on this became the compound for _____ cadets.

JL Oh really _____ (inaudible).

HRC While I was in Tehachapi they built the prison, the men's prison, and I would often say, "Well, when I was at Tehachapi there was nothing but _____", because it _____ (inaudible). I think....

JL You couldn't have been married at that time because you couldn't be a teacher and be married, I don't think, in those days but why?

HRC After a year there I applied at San Martin so I taught there for three years, what a wonderful community, _____ _____ and wonderful kids. So I taught there for one year, no no three, then after three years there in 1937 I applied in San Jose and that was wonderful to get a job in San Jose so I taught at Hester on The

Alameda. What a wonderful place to really start your teaching.

JL Now this would have been in what year?

HRC '37. And they were wonderful teachers like Eva Smith and Ruth Bradley, Thelma Roberts, Mildred Dunlap and outstanding and the most outstanding one was Eva Smith. Her grandfather had been the governor of Maryland during the Civil War and she had all these wonderful antiques which she left to me when she died. So many of these lovely antiques were from teachers that I taught with.

JL She taught first grade didn't she?

HRC Uh huh and she was the first grade teacher, demonstration teacher, for the college as I decided to be too. I taught there five years but the first year I was there I got married. That was unheard of to get married.

JL Well, in other words you didn't automatically lose your job?

HRC No I didn't.

JL Except you were frowned upon.

HRC Very frowned upon.

JL What did they do, they did keep you.

HRC Yeah.

JL So _____ in the late thirties it was permissible to be married?

HRC I guess I knew the right people (laughter). So anyway, Herb and I our first home was on 795 _____, Silvia's, a lovely store apartment place, corner of Mission and Second. I often drive by and it looks as good today as it did then. Well my brother came to visit us in 1940 and he had a _____ from Panama. He had a beautiful black Oldsmobile sedan and somehow or other he left it here and my husband and I bought it, I think we bought it for about $600, it was a beautiful car and then he bought a new one down in Panama. So anyway, he came back to see us again in 1942 and by that time the war had started, World War II had started.

JL Was he in the service?

HRC No, he was with the PWA and he taught the pilots that he trained to fly these big big planes, I know I have the

name of it (turning pages) Liberator 41 1133, that's when he was teaching young pilots how to fly these great big huge planes. But anyway, he lost his life doing that on a flight from Kansas City to Albuquerque, there was a terrible storm and the reason for the accident was the downburst wind sheer factor and the bomber had lost an engine and there was a freezing level of weather. So the San Jose newspaper columnist said that we heard that your brother's been lost because we didn't know for 10 days that he was gone but everybody on the plane was killed.

JL You found out from the newspaper that he was dead?

HRC Yes, in those days they would just call you. The next of kin was notified.

JL And they just said he was missing and so 10 days later they found his plane.

HRC Right, so my parents and I went down to Albuquerque on the plane to find out what was going on and when we got there we heard that they found the plane, the crash occurred at 13,000 feet in the Tiburon Mountains. We were so crushed and they were cremated and the ashes sent out and they had the funeral at the Rose Chapel of the Hill. So we have a family plot _____

_____ (voice fades out).

Well this is World War II and of course all the teachers' husbands were drafted and Herb's draft number was coming up so he decided to enroll because he taught....

JL You mean number.

HRC Enlist because that would give him better chances for promotion so on May 10, I think, he was on his way to the Post Office, a little post office that went on the kitchen in school. But he went on to San Francisco on Market Street with all the enlistees and then he went to _____ and they decided he would get in the Signal Corps so he went to Joplin, Missouri, Camp Crowder. So he was there for quite a while and he took a test to apply for Officers Candidate School so from there he went to New Jersey from the Signal Corps and he got his bars to be a lieutenant. At that time I was pregnant and Jon was born right after he got his bars as a lieutenant, which was a wonderful thing for my parents for the interest of this new baby. _____ _____ (voice fades).

JL Yes, the fact that your brother'd been killed shortly before. But then he would have been drafted even though

you were expecting a baby.

HRC Yes. Well anyway, at 1:00 a.m. February 1st, 1943 (turning page) my mother called Herb to say that he was a father. They were all very happy. And then Jon was about, I guess, oh lived on the farm till about two or three till Herb came back from overseas, He came back from Britain to see his son maybe when John was about six years old. And in May when he was born, I'm told, we went off to Florida to be with him so we were living in camp at Clearwater, Sarasota, Appalachicola, Alabama, Mississippi, all those places and without a car. And then my dear friend James Hugley drove the car across the United States and brought it to us so we were very happy to have the car.

JL (Question inaudible.)

HRC Well finishing up the car, we found out that he was transferred to the Air Force in the U.S. and when he brought it back he was _____ (voice fades out) telex school so we had to go from the southern states up to Washington, D.C. over to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania where he was in telex school. So he was there for quite a while, then we drove back across the United States when Jon was a year old and we

came back to San Jose. Then Herb was assigned to this squad in Bakersfield and then off he went across the nation and the _____ of England. After he was in England for a short time, Herb and _____ converted to Night Photo Reconnaissance, the planes that go over and take pictures and come back, unarmed and very dangerous. So when they came back Herbert had to interview the pilot and the engineers and the photographer. Then shortly after D-day they went over to France and to Holland and Belgium, _____ in Germany.

JL Now why did he return home?

HRC Oh he came home about 1945 and he landed at Camp Beale by Marysville.

JL Then you were able to kind of pick up your life again here in San Jose.

HRC Yes and then we lived in Los Gatos for a short time and then I was pregnant with my second child and Herb said he had a baby before the war and one after the war. So Carol was born and we moved onto Cleveland Avenue with a wonderful tree covered _____, _____ _____. We just had a wonderful neighborhood

_____. But Herb got a job in Santa Barbara so we lived there for five years, wonderful experience, it was on State Street and we had many friends there.

HRC Our home life on Cleveland Avenue was a joy. We had such neighbors as Jack and Elsie Pope and Evelyn and Clarence Taylor, the Devirians always wonderful, Al Wolfe and his wife Marcella who was a cousin of mine. So all our children grew up together and we're still friends.

JL They're all kind of old San Jose families too, aren't they?

HRC Yes uh huh, so it was really great. Who were some of the others that were there, the Reynolds and the Hoits, Jim Hoit and his wife, who continued all very close friends. Evelyn Taylor was the best one for entertaining and having a party. Well my parents were delighted at the thought of having this elegant home and they furnished it beautifully, a lot of things from Crider's in Los Gatos _____. On July 7, 1947 after we'd lived there for about a year, my father was killed back of Mount Hamilton. He was riding a horse gathering up the cattle on his property that he'd homesteaded and _____. So that was really sad, he was so

well liked because he, you know, had lived there so many years and had buildings and equipment from the City of San Jose. His funeral was tremendous _____ because so many people loved him and supported him. After he passed away, Herb and I saw this ad in the Wall Street Journal and he applied for the job of _____ _____ so we went there for five years.

JL Now where was this?

HRC Santa Barbara. It was a wonderful experience but my heart and soul was San Jose so we never sold our home on Cleveland Avenue so we came back to that. Of course my mother was very happy, I think she prayed every day that i would come back so we did. Our two children, Jon and Carol, went to _____ and to _____, two different high schools, they both achieved very well and then Jon decided he really wanted to go to Cal but Herb and I, everybody, said they were going to Pomona College because we were brainwashed by my cousins who said it was the best place, so he went there and after graduation from Pomona College he taught for one year at Leigh High School. He didn't like the high school level so back he went to Fairmont Graduate School and got his masters there. And then he got married to Ashley Wright, her father was Dean of the Graduate School. Well anyway he

then went to University of North Carolina and got his doctorate in English History. After graduation he got a job in North Carolina and he was teaching at Morris Hill College. Well while he was teaching there, some professors in Ireland asked him to publish his book, his dissertation. They asked if they could publish his dissertation because they were using it so much so for two years he really worked hard on his dissertation and got it finally published and called "Anglicizing the Government of Ireland." So it's very well received by historians and it's had a lot of good reviews. He's now living in Weaverville which is right out of Asheville, North Carolina.

HRC Well, getting back to our daughter Carol. Carol, who was born after World War II, went to Roosevelt High School in Santa Barbara and when she was, I think, about five years old we moved back to San Jose so she _____, Hoover, Lincoln and plus the fun years while she was at Lincoln she belonged to GIT, the girls high school sorority that _____ the happy times she had dating people like Jim Ledyard and oh on and on. But anyway after she graduated from Lincoln, she went to University of Pacific, her daddy's school, and she graduated with a major in Spanish and then she taught for, I think, three. But before that she married Jim Henderson who also was

from the University of Pacific and a major in education. They moved to Walnut Creek and I would say she taught for just a short time because of the rule you couldn't teach and be pregnant so she stopped. And her daughter was born and named Julie and then the second one Janie and the third one Katie and the fourth one Jackie. And Jackie's now a senior in high school so we're enjoying our girls very much. Now I wanted to tell you about....

(Long pause.)

(End of Tape 2, Side 1.)

(Beginning of Tape 2, Side 2.)

(Long pause.)

HRC When I was in college, I joined the sorority called Beta Gamma Chi. It had previously been known as the Browning Society and then they name changed it to Beta Gamma Chi because there was a Browning and a Stratt Society in San Francisco that they were confused with. I was so happy to belong because I'd never belonged to anything, I'd lived in the country and I never belonged to anything so I was a real sorority girl. Other sororities on the campus at that time were Sappho, Phi Cappa Phi, Allenian, Ero Sophian and then Beta Gamma Chi. Well every May this

group still meets, we meet at the San Jose Country Club the first Saturday in every May and so we always have a wonderful reunion. And I belong to a bridge club also that evolved by sorority sisters. My husband used to say it was the oldest bridge club in San Jose. I think it started about 1928. So the next thing I belonged to was the Stanford Children's Hospital; after I quit teaching that's what I joined and enjoyed it very much. It was started in 1942 to help the children's hospital. It has changed its name many times during the years, the latest is Lucille Salter Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford. They have a thrift shop in Willow Glen and it makes so much money for the hospital. It's been in, I guess, existence now for 53 years. The other organization that I enjoy is the Ladies of Charity. It was started in 1931 by Winifred Lee Grady and the Archbishop Hanna was the one that sponsored it. This organization helps the needy and especially the St. Elizabeth's Day Home. Another thing that I belong to is the P.E.O. and it has several chapters in San Jose and the chapter I belong to called D.E.N. This is sort of like a sisterhood rather than a club.

PL Do you know what P.E.O. stands for?

HRC It's a Philanthropic Educational Organization and they

own a college in Missouri called Conte College so it supports that college and it also supports many scholarships.

JL Now when did you join under P.E.O.?

HRC I think about 1972.

JL It's a relatively new one but maybe six years. I mean when you joined it was relatively.

HRC Yes.

JL But it's been around for longer than that.

HRC Oh it's been around since 1869.

JL Oh okay.

HRC It was established in Quincy, Iowa.

JL But now the San Jose chapter is....

HRC I think it was established about in 1923.

JL Oh, those are two old groups so Ladies of Charity '31 and

the P.E.O. about in the 20's.

HRC Then another group that I belonged to was Navalikhita. It's a book club and it was established over a hundred years ago. The name of it is called "New Reading" and they would always get new books to read by new authors and they buy the books and every two weeks they move it on to the next girl. There must have been about 24 members like Helen Typhony and Elizabeth Chalmers, Debra Carter, lots of wonderful ladies and I think this year is about the last year though because it's getting difficult....

JL But it is over a hundred years old.

HRC Yes, because the people have moved so far apart now that it's hard to get the books transferred and it's hard to get young people to join _____ (voice becomes inaudible). Another group I belonged to that no longer exists is the Kiwanianns. It was a group established around 1957 or '60 started by Mrs. George Snell, Althea, because her husband is in Kiwanis, downtown Kiwanis, and she wanted an auxiliary to help the men with their social activities. It was very nice.

JL Now how old would you say that group is?

HRC I would say 1960. A lot of the Ladies of Charity belong to it like Faye _____.

JL Those are quite a few groups.

HRC Yes it is. Oh and I must tell you about my 18 hole group at San Jose Country Club. That's my most fun, playing golf.

JL You still play golf.

HRC Yes. Thank you so much, Jackie. It's been wonderful.

JL Oh, well it sounds like you've had quite a life!

HRC (Laughter) it's been <u>quite</u> a life, yes.

JL And I do want to thank you. There's a lot of interesting material here that I'm sure will be very useful.

HRC You want it to be the most rewarding years and I think probably raising my children, the joy of children and grandchildren. And then the most difficult years probably were war years, but we were young and we accepted things and went on.

JL Well thank you so much, Helen.

HRC You're very welcome.

JL Helen would like to add a reading from her son, is it?, who read this to them on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

HRC It was November the 20th 1937 that we were married so on the Fiftieth occasion we decided to have a lovely party at the University of Santa Clara Faculty Club and we invited our family and close friends. My son was the Master of Ceremonies and he wrote this wonderful article for us. I wanted to enjoy it with you. He said,

HRC "Welcome and thanks for coming to the Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary of Helen and Herb Crawford, my parents. I've seen old friends and long lost relatives and I feel very much at home. I'm very glad to be here to help celebrate my parents' Golden Wedding Anniversary and I hope you're having a good time. At this point I would like to ask Mom and Dad to stand a moment by sister Carol and Jim will introduce the successive generations of the Crawford/Henderson brood of grandchildren. The year was 1937 and Franklin Delano Roosevelt had in 1936 been elected to a second term over my father's strenuous objections. A kid named Ronald Reagan was more

enthusiastic about Roosevelt's program at that time. I wonder whatever happened to him. The Great Depression was in all the headlines and the economy was battered by unemployment and extreme low wages. Where I lived in North Carolina the WPA was building the Blue Ridge Parkway and the CCC Camps were located in many parts of the mountains. So what did people do in the face of this crisis? They made music, naturally after the scenes of those songs of 1937 tell us a great deal about the unfettered spirit of the era. In The Mood was one of the songs, Ain't She Sweet, My Foolish Heart, Our Love is Here to Stay, Sweet and Lovely, As Time Goes By. It is hardly any wonder then that Herb Crawford and Helen Ruff fell in love and got married. The mood of the music was incredibly romantic and there was more; it was covertly erotic. Admittedly we're not talking about sex pistols here but the titles could be very suggestive. Think of the hidden meaning of songs like this: That Old Black Magic; does it suggest something rather sinister weaving spells in all that mystery of romance? Ain't Misbehavin'; how does that sound to you? Isn't it just what your children proclaim when they've just done something illegal? Night and Day; in the 1980's this might be understood as some kind of heroic endeavor distantly connected with marriage but in 1937 it was more subtle and _____. I've Got You Under My Skin; I'm not

even going to try to interpret that one." (My historian, this is my son, he's the historian.)

"How can we gain some perspective on fifty years of marriage? One way, use the raw data: the time spent together -- six hundred months, 18,250 days, almost three generations, 2,600 weeks, 438,000 hours and two lifetimes. Another way, use the headlines to sense the mood of the 1737's. Starting out was tough in 1937, there were few jobs so Dad, being very conservative, held as many as three at one time. Mom was teaching in those days and neither one of them had a lot of time on their hands so I had the good sense to wait six years before coming on the scene in 1943. My wife's cousin, Lucy, claims that all my problems stem from being unable to recollect a thing about my own birth and infancy but Mom has been quite helpful. She claims there was always sand in my diapers and I did some very undignified things in the domain of potty training. Here I confess that I have betrayed my sister, she has made me promise to say nothing even faintly Freudian but Dad claims that I have always been mildly rebellious and that this early sign was very much in character. We were in Florida and points east during the war while Dad was serving in the European theater flying reconnaissance and making us very proud of him. I dimly remember being rescued at age four

from a perilous rooster in the chicken coop." (He was on the farm.) "I suppose I was there to do some useful things like collecting eggs but the rooster was chasing me when my grandfather swooped down and cut off his head. Poppa, always known as George Ruff, was a legend in his own time, not necessarily because of this incident, and he had a great influence on both my parents as did my grandmother for years thereafter. In fact, I grew up supposing that everyone's grandparents spoke with a pronounced German accent.

"At this time, Mom produced a companion for me, a baby sister, who I understood was going to be mine. I was genuinely pleased with this development until I learned that this arrangement was flawed. My sister began to develop ideas of her own and strange habits which often included treachery. She told on me a lot in the early days. I was discouraged at the time but I have recovered and I find that most other siblings are equally bewildered by their rival intruders. I have never asked how my parents felt about the intrusion both of us made into their lives but I must say they seem freer now and more relaxed. Tell me, those of you experienced, is there life after parenting? Of course Mom and Dad were more than parents. Mom returned to teaching and Dad managed the lumber company when we were trying to grow

up.

"When we were moved to Santa Barbara, I remember feeling friendless and so tried to win new companions by trying organized sports. I played offensive guard on the asphalt playground at school while Mom looked on approvingly. Actually I don't remember cringing but it was about this time that she encouraged me to try ballet. Really! I don't recall Dad's reaction but I imagine him wondering if we were not being prepped, too effete and over sophisticated. Santa Barbara will do that to you. In fact, this illustrates a great attribute of both those people, they are very tolerant and very understanding. While they will share their ideas with you forthrightly, they are in practice genuinely sympathetic persons. I have a great deal of evidence of that to share with you. Example: a reasonably mild rebuke with smashing of family crystal; I was using it as a crown. An example: helping arrange a new insurance carrier with me after my speeding tickets in cars. It runs in the family, my son just got his second one in two months. Example: a rare Herb Crawford statement after I wrecked his favorite vehicle, the '53 Chevy truck, driving back from Yosemite in the snow. He said, 'Maybe this will teach you to take more responsibility for your actions.' That was all he ever said about it. I drove home at night in a driving

rain with only one headlight, showing even worse judgment but he simply surveyed the damage and made a new project for himself. He fixed it and used the truck for another seven years.

"This illustrates another point about my parents _____ _____ competence. I have always believed that they can do anything. I admire Mom's energy and vitality, I'm grateful for Dad's determination and fortitude. They have done many things from volunteer work to international travel, from investing wisely to creating wood furniture, from writing copious letters to entertaining a variety of friends and they are both models of inquisitiveness, always learning new things about the world. Still, when I think of my folks I often say they really belong to another century. I mean several things by that, not just the obvious. (Interruption for coughing) They are indeed old fashioned and they are more comfortable with Jimmy Dorsey's music than Mick Jagger or David Bowie. They fail to see the usefulness for a musician to be a transvestite in the 1980's or to use obscenities as an excuse for utter incompetence in the language arts. They believe in saving and don't believe in the credit economists and they never bought the notion of voodoo economics even though they voted for Ronald Reagan. No

politics please, I promise.

"Not that they have failed to make adjustments to change. I remember our first TV and the fascinating programs we used to watch: Bishop Fulton Sheen, now there was a rival to Johnnie Carson and Pat Robertson; and Lawrence Welk, an utterly captivating personality of such a dancer. Whatever happened to those sexy little girls he had on that show? And even the dour Edward R. Murrow had a bit _____. Actually Carol and I did not mind watching anything on TV. In the first blush of its introduction, the programming was strictly monitored by the human governor who was always enhanced, my father. There was, of course, one show that all enjoyed; we found Honeymooners absolutely hilarious perhaps because it was so unlike our own family. We roared with laughter when Ralph Cramdon would try to bully his wife and yell at his friend. His hairbrained schemes and his carping were always good natured and, I suppose, endeared him to us. Can you imagine offering a toast to a felicitous Ralph and Alice Cramdon after all those years!

"No, the real reason they belong to another century is because they possess the values of a different time. They preserve the durable values and virtues of our culture in a time that desperately needs them. They both

take pride in achievement, they have an ambition to do well and a commitment to helping others to do their best. And above all, they have a deep sense of honor. In my work I do a bit of traveling overseas and I always cringe when I hear the drunken boast of a loud Texan in Paris or the whining complaints of a Manhattan knight in a London department store. Lest I forget, I always remind myself of my parents traveling overseas with quiet dignity and representing what I think are the best of American values. Welcome."

HRC And that's how he ended our speech, I hope you enjoyed it.

(End of Tape 2, Side 2.)

(End of Interview.)